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SOVIET NAVAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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<p>This thesis seeks to provide an historical understanding of Russian and Soviet naval developments. This historical basis is provided to complement technological analysis of Soviet naval concepts and systems. The origins of Soviet naval traditions are examined, beginning with the establishment of the ancient Russian state of Kiev, the birth of the Tsarist Navy (under Peter I), the origins of the Communist State and Navy, and concluding with the Soviet naval developments during the Second World War. In examining these developments significant naval victories (Sweden, 1721; and Tchesme, 1770) and defeats (Crimean, 1853; and Tsushima, 1905) are noted, along with non-combat administrative reforms. The employment of the Russian Navy in World War One and the Soviet Navy in World War Two are also examined. The conclusion is drawn that the primary mission of the Soviet Navy is to support the Soviet Army in a continental theater. This conclusion is based on the historical failure of the Russian and Soviet Navies in conducting blue-water operations (inferring a notion of perceived futility in attempting these operations), the historical success in conducting coastal operations in support of the army (inferring the utility of these types of operations), and the historical land combat bias of the Russian and Soviet Militaries.</p>					
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A History of Russian and
Soviet Naval Development

by

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Lieutenant, United States Navy
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I. INTRODUCTION

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but do not know the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

- Sun Tzu [Ref. 1: p. 18]

To "know" the Soviet Union and its Navy, many Western sources tend to emphasize technological aspects, focusing almost entirely on weapons and systems. This type of analytical approach to understanding one's enemy, taking a system or component and removing it from its overall context, often completely ignores other less obvious contributions to the whole. In studying the tree the contribution of the forest is overlooked. The historical context of the system is one such neglected contribution.

In the Chief of Naval Operations' publication Understanding Soviet Naval Developments, 5th ed., only seven of over 150 total pages are devoted to the historical development of the Soviet Navy [Ref. 2]. This bias is not restricted to U.S. Government publications, in Norman Polmar's Guide to the Soviet Navy, 4th ed., only one of over 500 pages is devoted to history [Ref. 3]. In both these publications those pages not discussing historical developments are concerned with hardware aspects of the Soviet Navy.

The Soviet view as to the importance of historical knowledge to the understanding of navies and armed forces would appear to be markedly different from that demonstrated by these Western works. This view is articulated by Fleet Admiral Sergei Gorshkov in The Seapower of the State.

To understand better the possibilities of the present-day fleet and to gain an idea of its lines of development in the future, it is very useful to look at the processes of its development in the past and the role played by navies in the system of the armed forces of the states in strengthening their independent position.
[Ref. 4: p. 60]

This Western bias towards technological aspects of the Soviet Navy when married to the Western perception of naval importance, leads to a possible misinterpretation of the potential employment of Soviet naval force. Focusing on technology alone, mirror imaging applications of these technologies, and drawing conclusions as to employment is not limited to weapons systems. Low context (or often out of context) technologically biased analysis of Soviet Naval Force Control systems and the communications technology supporting these systems, is also common.

Crucial to understanding a military opponent is an analysis and understanding of the opponent's Command and Control. This analysis should not be conducted in a low context vacuum but rather with an understanding of how the historical framework in the system evolved. Rear Admiral

Alfred T. Mahan's comments on the timeless importance of the study of history:

A study of the military history of the past...is enjoined by great military leaders as essential to correct ideas and to the skillful conduct of war in the future....While many of the conditions of war may vary from age to age with the progress of weapons, there are certain teachings in the school of history which remain constant.... [Ref. 5: p. 4]

This thesis will seek to lay the basis for an analysis of Soviet naval operations and systems (including the structure of control systems), by developing an historical understanding of Russian and Soviet naval developments. In writing this thesis, the author does not propose the study of history at the exclusion of all other forms of analysis, but instead offers an historical framework of the Soviet Navy. The intent of this framework is to complement technological analysis of Soviet force control systems, not replace it. The scope of research will be to consolidate available knowledge of the historical development and employment of the Russian and Soviet Navies. This information can serve as a prelude for further comprehensive study of Soviet naval concepts and systems, especially force control and force control systems. Although not covered in the scope of this thesis, a particularly useful application of the concept of historical study would be an in depth analysis of the Soviet naval force control system and control structure of the Second World War.

The mere existence of Soviet naval traditions is, in itself, a debatable issue. An equally difficult subject is that given such naval traditions, when did they begin? What exactly are the roots of the Soviet Navy?

In answering these questions there appear to be two schools of thought. The first, more widely ascribed to by Western historians and naval writers, is that Soviet naval traditions are at best weak and discontinuous, and what traditions there are began with the reign of Tsar Peter I (the Great), in the eighteenth century. Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge, Federal German Navy (Ret.) comments that many Soviet references to a maritime history prior to Peter I are without proof and represent a convenient rewrite of history on which to base imperialistic claims. He further classifies these historical references as "fairy tales" [Ref. 6: pp. 2-3]. While Admiral Ruge's comments may appear emotional, when considering the West German view of the Soviets, the comments still reveal a skeptical view of the Soviet claims. One official U.S. Navy publication on Soviet naval developments addresses the matter bluntly: "The Soviet Navy traces its beginnings from the early 1700s when the Western-oriented Tsar Peter I founded Petrograd (now Leningrad)... and built a navy to fight the Swedes." [Ref. 2: p. 5]

The argument to these Western views is that Soviet and Russian naval traditions not only exist but that they are

also strong and longstanding. Admiral Gorshkov traces the development of these seafaring traditions as far back as the third century.

History shows that already at that time (the third century) the old slav tribes undertook ambitious sea voyages ... in 269 A.D. these tribes brought a large fleet and crushed Athens, Corinth and Sparta and reached Crete and Cyprus, (this) makes it perfectly obvious that, for the old slavs ... sea navigation and knowledge of sea routes on the Black, Marmora, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas were already far from new. [Ref. 4: pp. 66-67]

That the disagreement on the origins and existence of Soviet naval traditions is between the Soviet and Western camps is no surprise in view of the United States' own valid claims to a rich seafaring past and the resurgence of the Soviet Navy during the latter part of this century. But whether there are Soviet naval traditions, and whether in fact they began before, with, or after Peter I, is not really the issue. What is important, is that in the minds of Soviet naval personnel and Soviet peoples, these events are real. A naval tradition, after all, is not a genetic trait but rather a perceived trait. The Soviet view of the importance of history (previously espoused by Admiral Gorshkov) is further supported by Marxist-Leninist and military doctrine.

Marxist-Leninism teaches that without a deep knowledge of history it is impossible to correctly understand the present and predict the future. [Ref. 7: p. 3]

If the Soviets believe they have rich naval traditions, then regardless of historical fact, they do have a rich naval traditions. In the overall context of the Soviet Navy this

belief, a source of great pride to navy men, should be realized.

II. NAVAL DEVELOPMENTS PRIOR TO PETER I

Gorshkov places the genesis of Russian naval art in the seventh century A.D., when "our forefathers engaged in armed combat on the Black Sea." [Ref. 8: p. 13] While these events may have occurred, along with those of the third century, and Slavic peoples may have participated, the role they played in these events is suspect. The area of Eastern Europe which would later become Russia and from which these expeditions were launched was inhabited by Slavic people, the forefathers of the Great Russians. However, this area was ruled in succession by the Goths (200-370), the Huns (370-558), the Avars (588-650) and the Khazars (650-737).^{*} All of these groups forced the Slavic tribes to participate in both naval and military excursions, some of which were similar to those described by Admiral Gorshkov. It would appear, however, that any naval experience gained by the Slavs during these periods was as a result of conscription rather than out of any love of the sea, and furthermore did not include any "command time." [Ref. 9: pp. 33-34]

Lack of willing participation in itself does not diminish the historical relevance of these naval maneuvers. Rather the fact is that at the time they occurred, the Slavs lacked

^{*} The Avar horde was composed of Turkic and Mongolian tribes while the Khazars were a Turkic tribe.

any sort of unity which could be construed as a government. Clearly for any such events to have any bearing on "national" traditions, a nation, or at least something vaguely similar should exist. Prior to the ninth century, the Slavs discussed herein were disorganized factions of many different tribes, most of which were constantly at war with each other. [Ref. 10: pp. 1:39-34]

During the latter part of the ninth century some unity and order came to the region, and with it the birth of sovereign Russia itself. It was with this birth of a nation, however primitive, that seafaring traditions could themselves begin.

By the beginning of the eighth century the woodlands and steppes of Eastern Asia were widely populated by Slavic tribes. The most numerous of these clans had taken the tribal name Rukhs from one of their many conquerors.* This name was later corrupted to Rus and later to Russian. It was these Rus that were subjugated by the Goths, the Huns, and the Avars among others. [Ref. 11: pp. 21-22]

The Rus were apparently poor political organizers, for the best they could establish in the way of a nation was a loose confederation of city states. This confederation was less than ideal for "national" defense (witness the almost

* During the years 200 B.C. to 200 A.D., the steppe was controlled by Sarmatians, the chief tribe of which was the Alans. Some of the clans of this tribe were called the Rukhs.

constant rule by other tribes) and in the middle eighth century the Rus were again dominated, this time by Scandinavians. These Norsemen, or Varangians as they were known by the Rus, had been dominant in the North Sea and Baltic for centuries. As European populations expanded, the Varangians moved from the Baltic region down the wide, slow moving rivers of the steppe, to the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. Here, in the vicinity of the Crimea, the Varangians established the state of Great Sweden. Taking the name of their vassals for themselves, the Varangians began calling themselves Russians and Great Sweden the Russian Kaganate. The Kaganate flourished, trading not only with the Baltic states but also with the Eastern Roman Empire at Byzantium. This free flowing trade was almost entirely river based and depended on the control of the steppe. [Ref. 11: pp. 29-30]

In 850 the Khazars returned to the steppe, oppressing the Slavic city-states of the Dnieper river valley, and isolating Great Sweden from its Baltic trading partners. For the Slavic cities, the solution to this problem was to invite a force of Varangians, who also had reason to oppose the Khazar rule, into their cities, restoring order to the region. This call was answered by a Danish adventurer, Rurik of Jutland, a legendary chieftain with a wide reputation as a pirate.

[Ref. 11: p. 31]

Rurik established himself in the city of Novgorod in the Dnieper valley, and dispatched two of his lieutenants South,

to liberate the city of Kiev. These assistants, Askold and Dir, did just that but were not content to stop at Kiev. They joined forces with the Russians of Great Sweden and proceeded to mount a seaborne attack on Byzantium from across the Black Sea. This force made several stops en route to loot and plunder. This delay along with poor weather, allowed the Greeks effectively to thwart the attack. [Ref. 10: p. 1:70] While the assault itself was a failure it none the less can represent the birth of Russian naval operations.

Having reestablished the trade routes to the near East, Rurik returned to Denmark leaving Askold and Dir in control of Kiev. Although he never returned to Novgorod, he was willingly replaced as ruler by Oleg (a Norwegian) [Ref. 9: pp. 50-51], Rurik had secured a place for himself in Russian naval history. As late as 1904 on the eve of the Russo-Japanese war, the Imperial Russian Navy had in commission a cruiser bearing his name.* [Ref. 12: p. 207]

After a short period of time to establish himself in Novgorod, Oleg chose to relocate his fiefdom further South in Kiev. In doing so he also took the opportunity to kill the current rulers, Askold and Dir. [Ref. 10: p. 59] By selecting Kiev as his power base, Oleg established the Kievan State, a dynasty which would last until the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century. Kievan Russia was a federation of

* Rurik's subordinate Askold was similarly honored.

principalities which reached a height in 1054, and then began a gradual decline culminating in the Mongol invasion of 1240. [Ref. 11: pp. 41-44]

However fragile, it was during the Kievan period that Byzantine Christianity and the society that would carry Russia into the twentieth century were established. This period also saw a transition from a trade based economy to one based on agriculture. [Ref. 11: pp. 44-45] None the less, the Kievan State attempted five naval raids on Byzantium, the first led by Oleg in 907, and later raids in 941, 944, 971, and 1043 [Ref. 10: p. 1:81]. Due to a lack of continued strong leadership and the rise of the agricultural economy (vice trade), this fledgling maritime tradition fell into something of a decline along with the strength of the society in general [Ref. 9: pp. 67-80].

Despite the recession experienced by the Kievan state during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Russian maritime developments to that date had shown promise of continued progress. Although most of the exploits had been restricted to river operations (an exception being the Black Sea portions of those expeditions against the Byzantine Empire) it cannot be said what continued naval development would have spawned had it been allowed to occur. A possible progression would have been to expand maritime trade from the inland rivers to those waters outside the Russian



Figure 2.1 Kievan Russia
[Ref. 13: p. 35]

principalities. An expansion of oceanic commerce, would most likely necessitate the development of a blue-water navy to protect this commerce. Such idle speculation is pointless as this evolution of Russian seapower was not to take place. The reason for this retardation in development was the Mongol invasion of Eastern Europe and the resulting devastation.

The damage inflicted by the Mongols on all aspects of the fledgling Russian civilization was unparalleled in its scope. Having conquered most of Central Asia by 1215, the Mongols prepared to assault Eastern and Central Europe, along with China and the remaining portions of Asia. The attack on Eastern Europe was overwhelming, in short order in excess of 100,000 cavalry troops had overrun the Russians, Poles, and Bohemians killing the populace and destroying the cities of any who refused to succumb to Mongol rule. Kiev resisted and was annihilated. As much as six years after the onslaught Kiev was reported to have only two hundred houses left standing and the surrounding countryside littered with human bones. The city of Novgorod was spared partly because of its location in woodlands which were of little interest to the Mongols, but also because any assault would have taken place during the summer and the surrounding terrain (swampland) was less than ideal for the cavalry of the raiders. [Ref. 9: p. 82] While Novgorod had avoided the Mongolian holocaust, it did not escape military confrontation entirely. In 1240, as a result of a holy crusade against Orthodox Christianity, the

principality was invaded by Teutonic Knights. This invasion was successfully repelled but left Novgorod in a weakened condition. Realizing that to resist the Mongols in such a weakened condition would be useless, ruling Prince Alexander Nevsky succumbed to the inevitability of Mongolian rule.

[Ref. 9: p. 85]

In late 1241 the Great Khan of the Mongolian Empire died. As a result of his passing the invading armies returned Asia to allow their leaders to participate in the selection of a new Great Khan. In the wake of this withdrawal all of Asia and Eastern Europe had been conquered, the confederation of Russian city-states had been shattered and Kievan society was finished. [Ref. 14: p. 30]

As destructive as the Mongol invasion had been, the ensuing two and a half centuries of their rule, while not entirely destructive to the society, were to have several long term effects on Russia and her naval development. From the Mongols, the Russians learned the system of autocratic rule. The Russia that would emerge from the Mongol sphere of influence in the late fifteenth century would do so as an absolute monarchy. Gone would be the city-state alliance of principalities. While Russia endured centuries of Mongol rule, Western Europe would undergo a renaissance of science, art and technology. Dominated by an Asian power and isolated from the West, Russia would not benefit from this revival. When Russia broke the yoke of Mongol oppression she would

remain centuries behind the societies of the West. Lastly, and important to naval development, the invading forces which caused such destruction had attacked by way of land. The finest navy of the age could have done little to save the fragile state, and without a strong army to oppose the Mongols the Russians had quickly capitulated. This relative importance of land armies over ocean going navies remained a tenet of Soviet military thought. [Ref. 15. pp. 171-172]

Throughout the period of Mongol rule, a bitter rivalry over which city would be the political center of subjugated Russia raged between the cities of Novgorod and Moscow. Under the leadership of Ivan III (the Great)* Moscow slowly stripped Novgorod of territory and influence, absorbing the city into the expanding Muscovite state. In 1474 the Great Khan of the Mongolian Empire, concerned with the show of independence shown by Moscow, directed Ivan to make a personal appearance in tribute. Ivan defiantly refused and the Khan attempted to enforce his edict with military force. The Mongol armies were turned away and the Mongol domination of Russia was over. [Ref. 14: pp. 40-50] Having escaped from Mongol rule, Russia found herself isolated from the Baltic Sea by Sweden and Denmark, and from the Black Sea by the Turks and the Crimean Tatars. Covetous of access to salt

* With the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 and Constantinople in 1453, Ivan saw the Principality of Moscow as the third Rome and the protector of Christendom. As the Prince of Moscow Ivan assumed the title of Caesar or Tsar.



Figure 2.2 Growth of Moscow
[Ref. 9: p. 155]

water ports, succeeding Tsars and Tsarinas would relentlessly attempt to gain access to open, ice-free seas.

[Ref. 9: p. 186]

The most naval minded of these Tsars prior to Peter I was Ivan IV (the Terrible), grandson of Ivan III. Although his attempts to gain access to the Black and Baltic Seas were unsuccessful, Ivan IV did initiate Russia's Eastward expansion towards the Pacific Ocean [Ref. 11: pp. 105-106] along with several other contributions to the conception of the Russian Navy. It was during Ivan IV's rule that trade relations with England began and the port city of Arkhangelsk on the White Sea was opened to European merchants. Ivan IV also commissioned Western instructors in the arts of naval warfare and maritime sciences, and attempted to obtain English shipwrights and naval engineers. These latter requests were diplomatically refused by Queen Elizabeth although she did send Ivan a small sailing vessel as a gift.

[Ref. 12: pp. 8-9]

With the death of Ivan IV began the "times of trouble" (1598-1613), a particularly difficult period in Russian history marked by weak and confused leadership, internal and external strife, and a struggle to find a national identity. Throughout the times of trouble, Russia relentlessly continued her Eastward expansion. This disquieting period ended with the accession of the Romanov dynasty to the throne

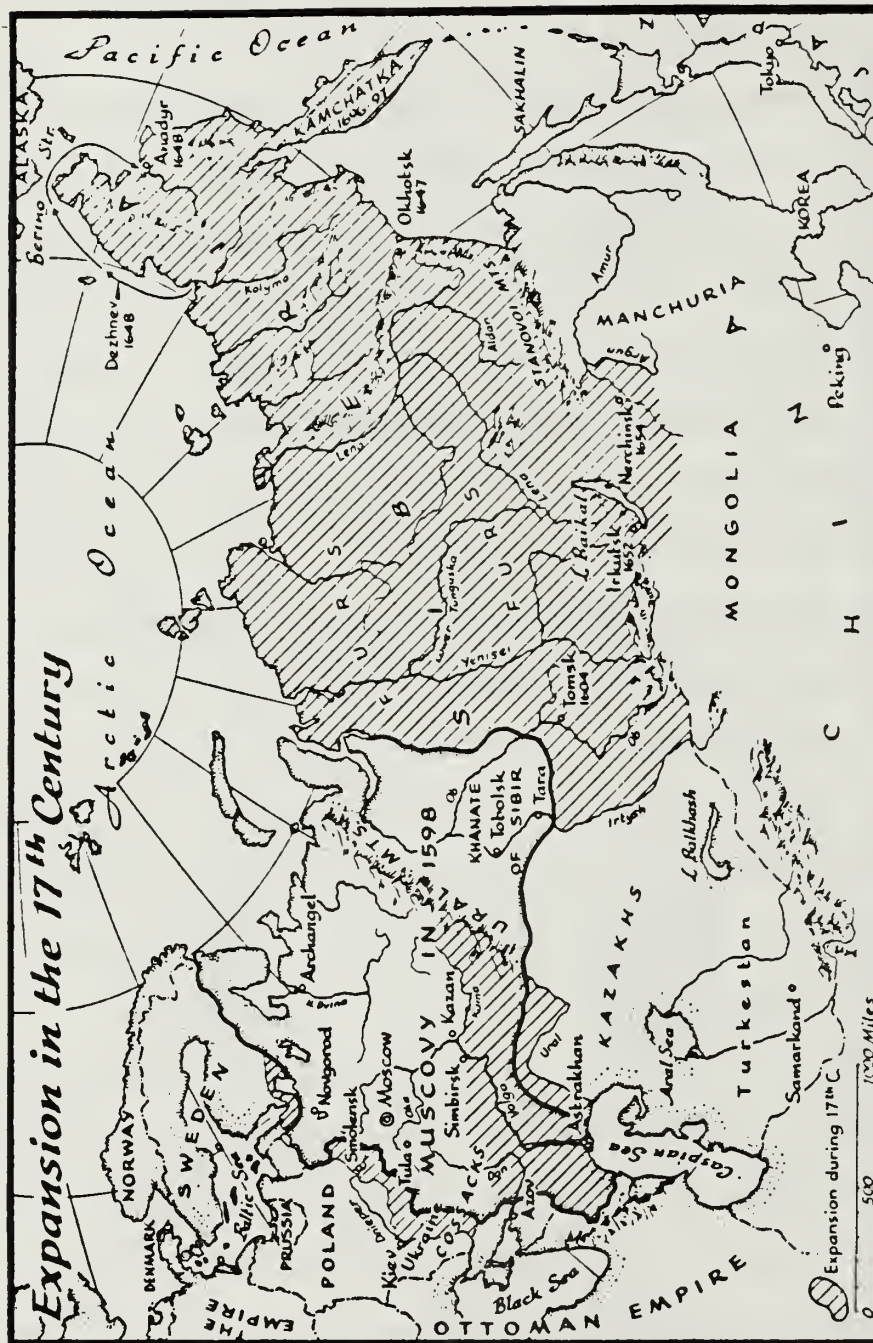


Figure 2.3 17th Century Expansion
[Ref. 13: p. 193]

of Russia. This family would rule Russia until overthrown by the communist revolution in the twentieth century.

[Ref. 13: pp. 157-158]

Naval developments during the first two regimes of the Romanov dynasty were small in scale. During the reign of Michael (1613-1645) Cossack pirates operated on the Black Sea and its river approaches, raiding both the Turks and the Crimean Tatars. Hardly loyal subjects, the pirates were not above raiding Moscow. [Ref. 11: pp. 124-125] Alexis (1645-1676) did secure a naval victory against the Swedes, capturing the island of Kotlin in the Gulf of Finland. This victory was short lived as the Swedes, in concert with the Poles, repulsed the Russians. During the reign of Alexis, Russia did make two attempts to start a shipbuilding industry. Both attempts were failures over the long term although the second effort produced the Orel 22, a three masted ship of some 80 feet in length, and a number of gunboats. [Ref. 12: pp. 14-15] It is not for the program of naval construction or the victory over the Swedes that Alexis is noteworthy. Rather it is for the contributions of his son, Peter I, the father of the Russian Navy.

III. THE TSARIST NAVY

While there may be dispute as to the traditional relevance of those naval events previously mentioned, there is no argument as to the profound, perhaps revolutionary, influence that Peter the Great had on the development of the Russian Navy. On this point Western and Soviet writers agree [Ref. 8: pp. 11-16, Ref. 2: p. 5]. It was during the reign of Peter I that a formal naval school was established, operational and organizational procedures were written, and a professional naval officer corps formed. Peter's rule also saw decisive naval victories over Sweden, a regional naval power of the era, and the attainment of coveted access to the Baltic. [Ref. 11: pp. 148-158]

At the time of Peter's birth in 1672, Russia was a backward, almost culturally bankrupt society dominated by the Orthodox church. Having been bypassed by the European renaissance, almost all Russian education was controlled by the clergy, and emphasized the humanities. There was almost no study of science and technology. [Ref. 13: pp. 206-207] There was in Moscow a sizable Western suburb of European immigrants, mostly merchants and military advisors. Alexis (Peter's father) frequently visited this suburb and Peter's mother had been a ward of a Russian nobleman who lived there. This parental interest in the West, and ready association

with the immigrants, was a trait shared by Peter. After he ascended to the throne, Peter sought to expand his knowledge of the West first-hand. [Ref. 16: pp. 19-23,150]

Thus was born the Great Embassy, a group of 200 well bred Russians, who from 1697-1698 toured Europe, visiting Sweden, Holland, England, Germany and Austria. Peter was the first Tsar to visit the countries of Western Europe. During his journey he studied shipbuilding, navigation and other aspects of these country's military establishments. After his return to Russia, Peter established a naval school to train officers, prepared a table of naval ranks and maritime regulations, and began a naval construction program using imported technical experts. At the time of his death in 1725, there were some 800 Russian ships and nearly 30,000 sailors plying the Baltic. [Ref. 9: pp. 254-271]

Peter's attempts to expand Russia toward the sea were partly successful.* A twenty-one year struggle with Sweden ended in 1721 with the Russians firmly established on the Baltic and several decisive naval victories to their credit. As to any Southern expansion, prior to the conflict with Sweden Peter had established a naval base on the Sea of Azov and was preparing to press on toward the Black Sea. Loss of

* Peter's expansion and naval exploration would continue after his death. Only a year prior to the end of his reign, Peter dispatched captain Vitus Bering on a voyage of discovery to determine whether North America and Asia were joined together. In 1728 Captain Bering discovered the strait which bears his name today. [Ref. 9: p. 277, Ref. 12: pp. 43-44]

support from Poland and Denmark in the Northern War, along with increased pressure from the Turks, forced Russia to surrender its Southern gains in 1711. Access to the Black Sea would not be realized until 1787. [Ref. 13: pp. 221-226]

During the years following Peter's death, the material condition and training of the Russian Navy declined significantly. The reasons for this decline are two. First, the institution and buildup of the Tsarist Navy was predominantly the result of Peter's insatiable desire for a navy and his strong personal interest in achieving these aims. Without the personal intercession of Peter, the Russian Navy would not have shown the development that it did. Many of the foreign naval leaders and experts, so instrumental in translating Peter's wishes into tangible results were personally loyal to Peter. When he died this loyalty was not transferred to his heirs. Secondly, the years after Peter's death were marked by an unstable procession of Tsars and Tsarinas, six different monarchs in thirty-seven years, all but two of which served for three years or less. This discontinuity of leadership and absence of royal interest, resulted in the Imperial Navy's decline. [Ref. 9: pp. 279-280, Ref. 12: pp. 42-43]

The Tsarist Navy began a resurgence under Catherine II (the Great). A Romanov by marriage only, Catherine ascended to the throne when her husband Peter III (grandson of Peter I) was overthrown. Catherine reorganized the Naval Academy

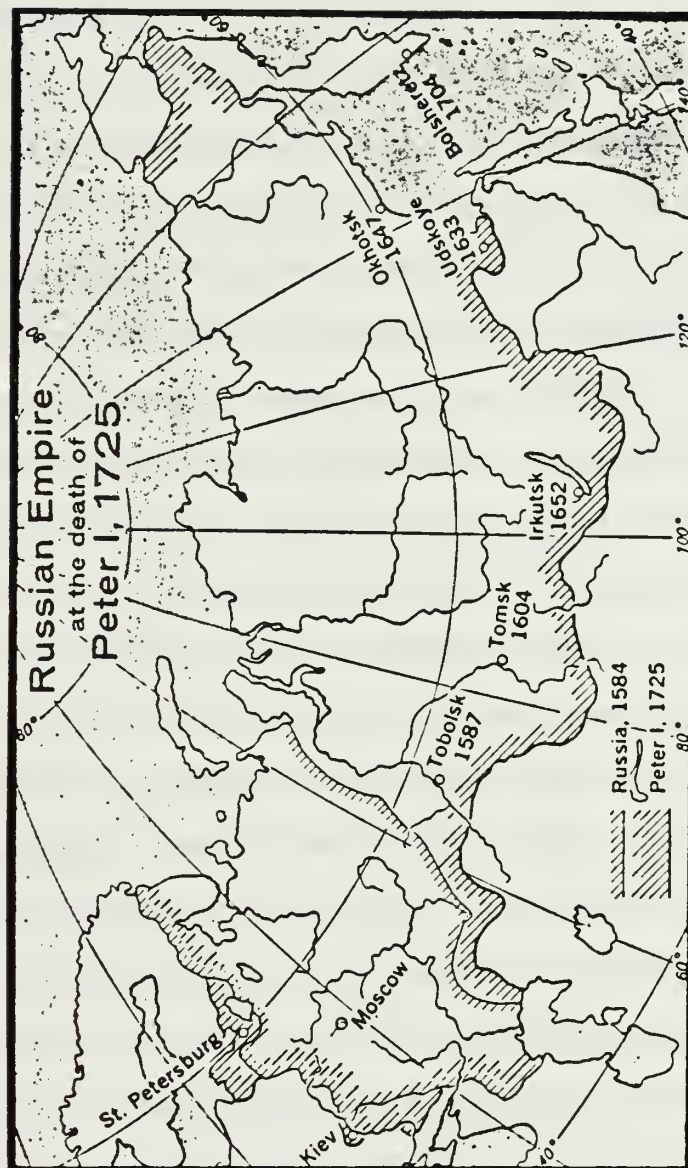


Figure 3.1 Russia at Peter's Death
[Ref. 14: p. 79]

and the Admiralty, restarted the naval construction program and hired fresh foreign officers* to lead her rebuilt fleets. [Ref. 17: pp. 27-28]

Having rebuilt the Baltic Fleet, Catherine set about obtaining access to the Black Sea and in September of 1768 Russia declared war on the Turkish Empire. One year later the Tsarina dispatched two squadrons from the Baltic Fleet with orders to circumnavigate Europe, enter the Mediterranean Sea and attack the Turkish Navy. The reason for this bold exercise in seapower was the hope of distracting the Turks from the Black Sea. The voyage was long and arduous and could not have been accomplished without the assistance of the English. Nonetheless, the maneuver was ambitious and daring for so inexperienced a fleet. [Ref. 14: p. 166]

The gamble paid off as the Russian squadrons sailed into the Aegean Sea and crushed the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Tchesme (July, 1770). The pressure relieved, Catherine sent her tiny Southern fleet out of the Sea of Azov and into the Black Sea, where the Turks were again defeated [Ref. 17: p. 28]. During the remaining fifteen years of her reign there would be another confrontation with the Turks (1787), with results similar to the first, and a continuing struggle with the Swedes which resulted in a successful naval war from

* One of the notable foreign officers recruited by Catherine was the American naval hero John Paul Jones. This appointment, coming as it did so soon after the American revolution, caused a good deal of distress among the British naval officers serving in the Russian Navy.

1788-1790. By the time of her death in 1796, Catherine's Russia would be firmly established on the Baltic and Black Seas, maintaining strong fleets in each.

[Ref. 17: pp. 28-33]

Geopolitical activity in Europe following Catherine's death was in a chaotic state of multi-national war, as Napoleon attempted to conquer the continent. Primarily a conflict between a great land power (France) and a great sea power (England), other nations were drawn into the fray as alliances were made and broken, and both peace and war were declared frequently. Tsarist Russia was not exempt from this chaos. During the first fifteen years of the eighteenth century Russia was: allied with France twice, at war with France three times; allied with England three times, at war with England twice; allied and at war with Turkey once; and allied with Austria, Denmark, Naples, and Sweden though not continuously or necessarily simultaneously.

[Ref. 14: pp. 183-209]

The Tsarist Navy took part in naval engagements associated with many of the conflicts of the Napoleonic era, fighting some of the strongest and weakest navies of the age. Although the Russian Navy did engage the navies of France and England during these years, she never did so alone, always having the assistance of an ally. Throughout the Napoleonic era the Russian Navy gave good account of itself, produced

several native Admirals, and emerged from the wars in 1815 second only to the British Navy in strength.*

[Ref. 12: p. 135]

Following the Napoleonic era, the Russian Navy suffered a period of neglect and by 1825 almost all Russian naval power was concentrated in the Baltic. Naval developments under Nicholas I, who came to power in 1825, were inconsistent. No strong supporter of the Navy and very land oriented, Nicholas drafted the best naval personnel for service in the army. By 1840 the Russian Navy had slipped to third place, behind the French. The Russian Navy did combine forces with the English and French and defeated a Egyptian-Turkish fleet at the Battle of Navarino in 1827. this action ignited yet another Russo-Turkish conflict, lasting from 1828-1829. [Ref. 12: pp. 135-138, 146-153]

Up to this point in history the Tsarist Navy had fared reasonably well in conflicts with the other navies of the day. There had been both victories and defeats, and despite a succession of land oriented rulers, the Russian Navy, while not the best navy of the age, remained a capable force. The Crimean War was to mark a change in the good fortune of the Russian fleets, and would began a long period of domination

* The Napoleonic wars had left the French Navy almost completely destroyed. The Spanish had ceased to be a power for some time and the Turks and Swedes, never really major naval powers at the start of the war, had suffered an overall decline. These developments left the Russians in a fortunate second place. This second position, however, was a distant one in all aspects.

of the Russian Navy by some of the world's most powerful navies.

The Crimean War was triggered by Nicholas I's resumption of the ancient Russian attempts to gain free access to the Mediterranean Sea. In 1853 Russian Armies occupied the Balkans, a Turkish principality, and threatened the Straits of the Bosphorus. Turkey immediately declared war and demanded the Russians withdraw. The Tsar refused and in November 1853 destroyed a much weaker Turkish Fleet at the Battle of Sinope. Impending Russian domination of the region prompted England and France, displaying uncharacteristic cooperation, to enter the war on the side of the Turks. The Anglo-French alliance blockaded the Baltic, harassed the Russian fleet in the Pacific, and sailed a naval force into the Black Sea laying seige to the Russian stronghold of Sevastopol. The weaker Russian fleet remained in port, moving naval cannon and personnel ashore for defense of the city and scuttling ships to block the harbor. After a year of isolation the Russians surrendered, abandoned the Balkans and peace was declared. The Treaty of Paris of 1856 included prohibition of Russian naval units and coastal fortifications on the Black Sea. A military and naval catastrophe, the Russian nation had faced front line European powers and lost, suffering a substantial loss of political and military strength in the process. [Ref. 13: pp. 336-340]

After the Crimean disaster, the Russian Navy began the final stages of transition from a wooden navy, powered by sail, to one of iron, powered by steam. An agrarian economy and corresponding lack of industrial base made this a particularly difficult transition for Tsarist Russia. Although technological advances were slow, a number of administrative reforms were completed. These reforms were directed by Minister of Marine Grand Duke Konstantin, also the brother of Tsar Alexander II. The Grand Duke reorganized the fleets more along Western lines and made provisions for a reserve [Ref. 12: pp. 173-182]. A gradual buildup of Pacific capabilities at Vladivostok was begun and the Baltic Fleet made out of area cruises including a visit to New York City during the American Civil War. The Black Sea remained free of Russian naval presence until the Treaty of Paris was denounced in 1871. Another attempt at the Bosphorus was made in 1877 and again British intervention prevented a Russian success, although the Black Sea Fleet survived the conflict. Eastern expansion continued to conflict with that of Japan, a rapidly rising Pacific power. This conflict would ultimately be resolved by the Russo-Japanese War.

[Ref. 12: pp. 183-203]

The Russians found the accommodations for the Pacific Fleet at Vladivostok to be deficient. Vladivostok was ice bound in winter and somewhat isolated by straits controlled by Japan. Intent on improving their access to the Pacific,

Russia leased Port Arthur, on the Yellow Sea, from China. China had only recently obtained the city during a war with Japan. Russian occupation of a city so recently held by Japan set the two nations on a course for war.

[Ref. 17: p. 40]

During the years preceding the Russo-Japanese War the Russian Navy had built what appeared to be a formidable fleet. This fleet would prove to be a paper tiger as important advances in technology (including radio communications) were neglected, and training and shore facilities were overlooked. These factors, along with the superior personnel and tactics of the Japanese, would result in a final and complete defeat of the Tsarist Navy. [Ref. 12: pp.197-203]

At the outbreak of war Russia had a numerical, although not qualitative, advantage over the Japanese. The logistical and tactical disadvantage of the Russian fleet was made worse by the fact that their numerical advantage over the Japanese was made up of ships half a world away, in the Baltic. The Japanese fleet was strategically concentrated in the theater and had the further advantage of superior shore support with short supply lines. [Ref. 12: pp. 206-212]

Striking quickly in hopes of securing an early victory, the Japanese made a surprise attack, prior to declaration of war, on the Russian squadron at Port Arthur. Due to defective ordinance, this attack was not completely

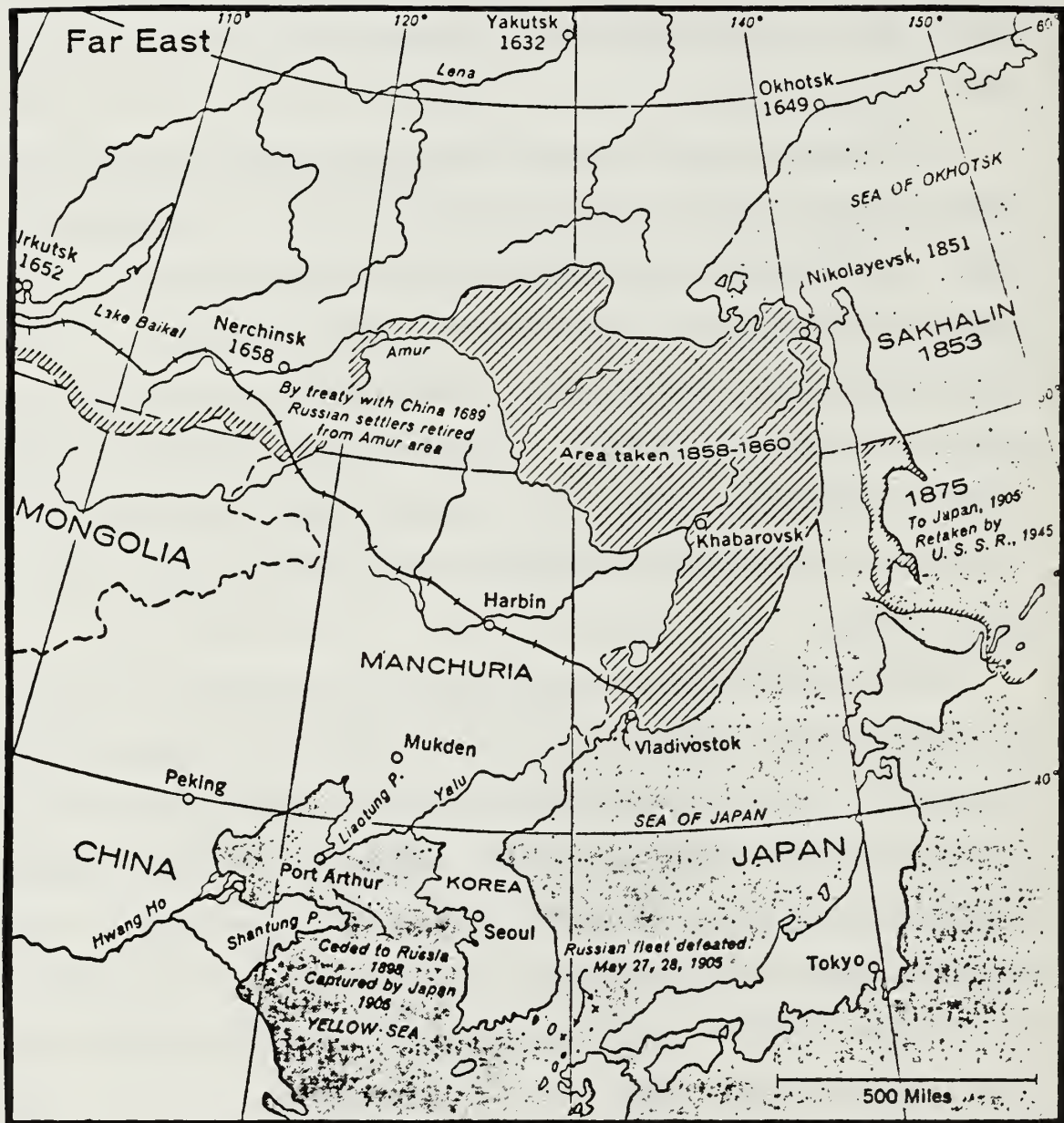


Figure 3.2 The Far East, 1905
[Ref. 14: p.337]

successful and the Japanese blockaded both Port Arthur and Vladivostok. Several Russian attempts to break out of their ports were unsuccessful. With the Pacific fleet trapped in port the Baltic Fleet set sail to relieve their countrymen. Denied use of the Suez canal, the long transit took its toll in morale and material condition. When the Baltic Fleet finally arrived in the theater, it met the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Tsushima Strait. This battle. in May of 1904, was the Tsarist Navy's last and most humiliating defeat. The effects of the long voyage, poor training, and overwhelming tactical superiority of the Japanese fleet resulted in thirty-four of thirty-seven Russian ships being lost.

[Ref. 12: pp. 264-265]

The Russo-Japanese war left the Baltic and Pacific fleets in ruin. All that remained for the Tsarist Navy was the aging Black Sea Fleet. The Russian Navy found itself in sixth place world wide behind the United States, Germany and Japan. The Tsarist Navy would never recover, attempts to rebuild would be made, but these efforts would be overtaken by revolution and World War. [Ref. 12: pp. 267-282]

The period between the Russo-Japanese War and World War One was one of considerable domestic turmoil for the whole of Russian society. As Imperial Russia slowly and laboriously modernized during the Industrial revolution, the population came to realize that the present Tsarist system of government, born of a feudal agrarian society, could not

effectively govern in the industrial age. The mass of Russian population was shifting from the rural countryside to the cities and more and more of the citizenry began to draw their subsistence from a factory wage rather than from the land. This rising proletariat found themselves overworked and underpaid, unable to compete with the more modern, and democratic, industrial nations of the West. From this dissatisfied environment sprang unions and other types of political collections of workers, the Bolsheviki included. During the years prior to the war these organizations' attempts to gain a political foothold in the Russian government were unsuccessful as a majority of Russians remained nationalistically loyal to the Tsar.

[Ref. 14: pp. 332-334]

After the humiliating defeat on both land and sea by the Japanese, support for the Tsar plummeted and the monarchy began to lose its iron grip on Russian society. In 1905 a series of strikes and riots by the ever more powerful workers' unions escalated to revolution. The Russian military took an active part in the revolt, including the storied mutiny of the Black Sea Fleet Battleship Potemkin.*

* On June 27th, 1905, the crew of the Potemkin mutinied, killing the Captain, Executive Officer, the Chaplain and four other officers. The remaining officers escaped leaping overboard. The exact cause of the revolt is speculative, there are two stories. The common parts of both accounts are that the crew was dissatisfied with the quality of rations, and that one rating was shot by the Executive Officer. After the revolt, the Potemkin was pursued by the Black Sea Fleet. After evading pursuit for nine days the ship, exhausted of

While this revolt did not bring down the Tsarist government it did force several governmental reforms including the election of a national non-deliberative legislative body (the Duma), and the recognition of the first Soviets (councils of workers). [Ref. 11: pp. 261-271]

After the Russo-Japanese War the Tsarist Navy was faced with a substantial rebuilding requirement if it was to regain its pre-war prominence. In the atmosphere of political unrest following the war, this reconstruction was not accomplished. On the eve of World War One, the Russian Navy found itself in poor material condition and beset by low morale. [Ref. 18: pp.160-164]

The World War would do little to improve this situation. In the Baltic, although numerically superior to the German Fleet (most German assets were devoted to the North Sea), the Russian Fleet was subordinated to the Army, and relegated to fighting a mine warfare campaign in defense of Petrograd (during the war the germanic name of St. Petersburg was replaced with the former). The Russian capital ships rarely ventured out of port. [Ref. 18: pp. 166-172]

The situation in the Black Sea was little better. Here the Russians were fighting their old enemies the Turks once again. The Dardanelles were closed early in the war by German and Turkish attacks, and only through a major land

coal and water, was scuttled. She would be raised however and participate in World War One.
[Ref. 18: pp. 156-159]

campaign could they be reopened. There were several allied attempts at forcing the straits, but French and British support (occupied with more pressing concerns in Europe) was sporadic. Without consistent Anglo-French assistance the straits remained blocked for the balance of the war and the Russian Fleet was contained in the Black Sea. [Ref. 18: pp. 173-178]

World War One marked the last employment of the Tsarist Navy. A navy of glorious success (the Battle of Tchesme) and miserable failure (the Battle of Tsushima Strait), the Imperial Navy had suffered mainly from starvation of attention of the Russian Monarchy. With the (glaring) exception of Peter I, and to a lesser extent Catharine II, the Russian Navy had been ignored by the throne. Russia's justifiable continental bias (both the Mongols and Napoleon had arrived by land rather than sea) had relegated the navy to a secondary position behind the army. In such a deprived environment a navy of Western quality did not evolve.

IV. THE SOVIET NAVY

The fall of the Russian Monarchy and the birth of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1917 was a changing of the guard which had its genesis during World War One. Domestic conditions in pre-War Russia had changed little from those before the Russo-Japanese War in spite of the 1905 revolution and its reforms. At the dawn of the World War, Imperial Russia was a political disaster in waiting, a government teetering on the brink of collapse. The political and economic impact of the war would provide the impetus to bring the whole structure crashing down.

Imperial Russia was ill-prepared to participate in a war of the scope and technology required by World War One. She lacked the industrial capacity to equip and maintain a large army. As the political climate became increasingly more radical, what troops Russia did have under arms became decreasingly loyal to the Tsar (and their own officers). Nonetheless the country mobilized over fifteen-million men. During the course of the war this army would suffer a combination of over seven-million casualties and prisoners. This large exodus of eligible workers to the front further reduced an already weak industrial and agricultural capacity. Strikes increased in number and violence. The situation came to a head in March of 1917 when Tsar Nicholas II (the last of

the Romanovs) was forced to abdicate, leaving the throne to his brother Michael. Realizing that the title was a losing proposition, Michael himself would abdicate in favor of a Provisional Government after a reign of only one day. [Ref. 13: pp. 453-455]

This Provisional Government was established in the capital of Petrograd, and was quickly recognized by the United States along with other Western democracies. The new government, a darling of democracy, was beset from the start by a formidable rival for control of the country. This rival was the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies which had been established at the same time as the Provisional Government. The Petrograd Soviet represented the citizens, workers and (although the country was engaged in a World War) soldiers. Initially the Petrograd Soviet was controlled by the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. These factions were more moderate than the third socialistic faction, the Bolsheviks. Because of the moderate nature of the Soviet, an overt power struggle with the Provisional Government was delayed. The Petrograd Soviet did issue the famous Order No. 1, which provided for elected political committees to run military units. This Order was followed closely by the issuance of Order No. 2 which placed all arms in the control of the committees (vice the officers) and abolished saluting and other military discipline, including removing authority from off duty officers. These reforms did much to endear the

military (exclusive of the officers who were a small minority) to the Soviet. Occurring as they did during the war, these reforms further degraded the efficiency of the military and increased domestic strife.* [Ref. 14: 556-566]

In April of 1917 Vladimir Ilich Lenin returned to Russia from exile in Switzerland and began directing the Bolsheviks in their methodical usurping of the Provisional Government's power. In July a premature attempt at seizing complete power failed and Lenin fled to Finland, although he continued to direct the Bolsheviks. In mid-September the Bolsheviks gained majority control of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets and Lenin returned to Petrograd. Lenin's return was to have lasting consequence. On November 7th and 8th (in concert with the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison, sailors from Kronstadt, and the Worker's Red Guards) the Bolsheviks stormed the Winter Palace and overthrew the Provisional Government. [Ref. 13: pp. 458-461]

Naval participation in the Revolution was not limited to the sailors from Kronstadt, although these sailors were some of the most militant elements of the Bolshevik manpower base. The signal to begin the assault was the gunfire (although blank rounds) directed at the Winter Palace by the Baltic cruiser Aurora. The sailors from Kronstadt and from the

* The Petrograd Soviet also issued the Bill of Soldiers Rights, declaring that all soldiers were entitled to certain civil rights. These rights included political and religious freedom, freedom of expression, and abolition of corporal punishment at the front and throughout the country.

Baltic Fleet would prove loyal to the Revolution through the ensuing consolidation of power by the Bolsheviks. In December the Commander of the Baltic Fleet was replaced by a former sailor and in January of 1918 the Imperial Navy was officially abolished. In place of the defunct Tsarist Navy would rise the Red Navy. [Ref. 12: 330-331, Ref. 18: p. 187]

Imperial Russia had fallen as a result of her inability to participate in World War One. The Bolsheviks would not make the same mistake. With the alternatives of continuing the war and risking governmental collapse, or peace and governmental stability, the young administration chose peace. In April a Soviet-German peace treaty was signed. This treaty was not without price however, for the Germans recognized the Soviets precarious position. As a result of the treaty the young government was forced to cede twenty-seven percent of her arable lands and some sixty million people to puppet states (Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania) controlled by Germany. [Ref. 13: pp. 476-478]

The premature departure from the war by Communist Russia aggravated the Allies (Great Britain, France, and the U.S.), for the peace removed the pressure on the Central Powers caused by the Eastern front. The Allies refused to recognize the Soviet-German pact and were intent on continuing the war in the East with or without Soviet help. There were also large amounts of Allied war supplies in the Russian ports of Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, and Vladivostok. The Allies did not



Figure 4.1 Revolution and Civil War in Russia
[Ref. 13: p. 481]

want these supplies to fall into Bolshevik or German hands. This interest in the affairs of the new government would result in Allied intervention in favor of the counter-revolutionary forces (the Whites) during the ensuing Russian Civil War. [Ref. 11: pp. 305-306]

Although the White movement existed prior to the Allied intervention it was this intervention in the summer of 1918 which resulted in outbreak of the Russian civil war. The intervention involved fourteen countries including the U.S., Japan, Great Britain, and France. During the early part of the war the Whites enjoyed some military success, threatening the Red strongholds of Petrograd and Moscow. Largely because of the strong leadership of the Red Minister of War, Leon Trotsky, the Soviets were able to defeat the Whites in spite of the Allied intervention. This intervention gradually declined and effectively ended by late 1920. Power consolidation continued and by late 1922 the capital had been relocated in Moscow and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) officially came into being. [Ref. 13: pp. 483-487]

The level of Red Navy activity varied from theater to theater during the Civil War. At the outbreak of the war the Baltic region contained the strongest Red fleet. Unfortunately it was also the region where the strongest interventionist naval opposition was to take place. A force of British cruisers and destroyers sailed into the Baltic and

contained the Red fleet forcing the Bolshevik naval force to cower in their ports on the Gulf of Finland. Clear evidence that navies do not in and of themselves win wars, the British naval success had little effect on the outcome of the war on land as the Red armies defeated those of the Whites in that region. [Ref. 12: pp 335-340] Perhaps one reason for the Reds' continental success and maritime failure was the use of Red sailors as Naval Infantry to augment the Army [Ref. 4: pp. 127-128]. In the remaining fleet areas (the Far East, Black, and Arctic) the Reds had very limited naval forces relative to the Whites. Nonetheless successes on land carried the day as the White Armies were systematically defeated. [Ref. 12: pp. 342-354]

The tumultuous period from 1914 to the end of the Civil War in 1920 made any progress in the area of naval development impossible. With the Tsarist government overthrown and the Navy racked by mutiny, many officers fled into exile or were killed outright. To make matters worse there would be one last disaster to befall the naval establishment; the Kronstadt Naval Revolt. In March of 1921 the sailors of the Kronstadt Naval Garrison, sailors who had been so fanatically loyal to the revolution, revolted again, this time against their former leaders the Bolsheviks. With the Civil War over the sailors demanded reforms, not unlike those established in the Bill of Soldiers Rights of 1917.

Intolerant of such dissent the Bolsheviks ruthlessly crushed the uprising with great loss of life on both sides.

[Ref. 18: pp. 197-200]

There were two naval lessons learned by the Bolsheviks during the Revolution and Civil War. First, lacking naval superiority, the Reds had been blockaded by the Allies. This blockade made resupply of the Red Army difficult while the White forces had free maritime resupply. The lack of open Sea Lines of Communication caused much hardship in Soviet Russia. In spite of this naval imbalance, a strong and efficient army was able to secure victory. The lesson for the Bolsheviks was that a strong navy certainly made ones life easier but in a predominantly continental campaign, the army was most important to victory. The second lesson learned concerned the political reliability of the Navy. The sailors of Kronstadt had revolted not only against the Tsar and the Provisional Government, but also against the Bolsheviks. Clearly the Navy was an organ over which close scrutiny and control must be exercised.

[Ref. 12: pp. 355-356]

During the decade following the Civil War the new Soviet Government became somewhat isolationist, turning its resources inward as it attempted to rebuild the shattered economy. The difficult industrial task of rebuilding the Navy would take a back seat to this domestic reconstruction and it would not be until the inauguration of the first Five

Year Plan (1929) that serious attempts at naval reconstruction could begin. The isolationist years were not entirely dormant in the area of naval affairs as many "paper improvements" were made. These advances included organization of more naval schools (albeit communist ones), and a technical information exchange program with the German government. [Ref. 12: pp. 358-362]

The 1929 decision to begin rebuilding the fleets also began a debate centered about the exact type of navy the nation would build. This debate between proponents of a sea-control navy (Traditionalist) and a sea-denial navy (Modernist) continues to this day in the Soviet naval establishment. The discussion in the early years was driven not so much by innovative strategic thought but by economic necessity. The Traditionalist, or Old School argument proposed a Mahanian navy consisting of a balanced force of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, a force not unlike the stronger navies of the era (Japan, Great Britain, U.S.). Most proponents of the Old School were former Tsarist officers. The Traditional navy was also expensive to build and maintain. On the other hand the Modernist, or New School argument proposed a "guerrilla" navy of submarines, small fast surface craft, and naval aircraft. The New School proponents were the younger officers, schooled in Marxism-Leninism, who were rising to positions of influence in the Soviet Navy. The strongest selling point of the Modern navy

was the fact that it did not require large industrial resources to build, and once built was relatively inexpensive to maintain. Because of the weak Russian economy and lack of industrial capability the Modernist argument won out and construction began, continuing into the thirties.

[Ref. 19: pp. 19-21]

By 1937 the Soviet industrial capacity had recovered to the point that construction of a more Traditional fleet could be considered. Joseph Stalin (who after Lenin's death in 1924 had become the General Secretary of the Communist Party) had never really embraced the Modernist approach and the notion that the Soviet industry could only build the inexpensive Modernist fleet was, by implication, a criticism of Stalin himself. The growing German threat, the ability to "do better", and Stalin's desire for the status obtained by a larger fleet, factors which in combination resulted in the naval construction program taking a more Traditional course after 1937. [Ref. 12: pp. 365-372]

Concurrently, though not necessarily linked with the revised construction program, Stalin began the infamous purges of the nation's military officers. Regardless of any association, the purges served to silence any dissent to Stalin's new naval policy. The Soviet Navy lost many top officers to the purges, including the Commander-in-Chief and the commanders of all of the fleets save the Pacific.

[Ref. 12: p. 373]

On the eve of World War Two the Soviet Navy was in a similar position as that of the Tsarist Navy on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War. The material condition of the fleet was better than in 1905, but the new construction program had been in existence for only five short years. The fleet remained essentially a Modernist one. The real similarity was the level of experience and morale of the officer corps. The purges had eliminated most of the experienced senior naval leadership, and those officers who survived the purges were uncertain of their positions. Another purge could begin at any time, so the officers trusted no one. World War Two was the first real test of the new Red Navy. Although slightly better prepared than their Tsarist ancestors had been in 1905 and 1914, the result of the naval conflict would be no different. [Ref. 18: 207-208]

As the Japanese had surprised the Russians at Port Arthur in 1914 and the Germans had surprised the Russians in Eastern Europe in 1914, so was Stalin surprised when Hitler launched "Operation Barbarossa", the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941. Prior to the offensive, the German Navy had covertly laid minefields across possible Soviet naval access to the Baltic and Black Seas. When the offensive began, the German Army swept quickly along the Southern coast of the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland. The Soviet Fleet attempted to leave its ports but suffered greatly at the hands of the preemptively laid German minefields. The advancing Germans quickly



Figure 4.2 Russia in World War Two
[Ref. 13: p. 519]

overran most of the Soviet Naval bases and the remaining Red ships were forced to retire to Leningrad and Kronstadt. With Leningrad besieged, the naval war in the Baltic became a stalemate of mine warfare attrition. The Soviet Army, with some assistance from the idle naval forces [Ref. 6: pp. 20-21], was able to defend Leningrad successfully until the tide of the war turned in 1944 and ultimately chased the invaders back into Germany. [Ref. 18: pp. 209-212,221]

In the Black Sea the Soviets fared little better. Due to planning difficulties the Wehrmacht was slow in mounting an offensive, and the Soviets were able to sortie with considerably less damage than in the Baltic. The German strategy in the Black Sea was the same as in the Baltic; to deny the Soviets their naval bases and hence render the Soviet Navy useless. The German Army moved into the Crimea and laid siege to Sevastopol. The siege of Sevastopol, unlike Leningrad, was a German success. Again, like Leningrad, the Soviet Navy and naval personnel played a role in the land defense of the city. The loss of Sevastopol forced the Soviets to conduct their naval operations (mostly amphibious in nature and in support of the Soviet Army) over extended distances from the only Black Sea ports they had remaining (on the eastern coast). The German advance continued East, capturing Novorossisk, but stalled before the remaining Black Sea ports could be taken. In 1943, overextended along the Eastern front, the Germans began to be

forced back and by 1944 Sevastopol was back in Soviet hands. The loss of West coast Black Sea bases and subordination to Army command made the Black Sea Fleet, although numerically superior to the Axis naval forces, ineffective by Western naval standards. The Soviet Army defeated the Germans in this theater as they had in the Baltic, and the Soviet Navy apparently had little to do with the success. [Ref. 12: pp. 404-419]

The Soviet Navy also operated in the Arctic and Pacific Oceans, though their contribution in these theaters is hardly noteworthy. In the Arctic, with a good deal of Allied naval assistance, the flow of war supplies to Murmansk was never really threatened. Operations against Japan consisted of a successful amphibious assault of the Kuril Islands. The Soviet Union's war lasted only one week in 1945, and was against an opponent who was already virtually defeated. [Ref. 18: pp. 213-214,225]

The Soviet Navy in World War Two had proven to be embarrassingly ineffective in the Black and Baltic Seas, an afterthought in the Pacific, and a minor part of a larger Allied effort in the Arctic. The Soviet Army, on the other hand, had defeated the invading German Army. The role played by the Soviet Navy in this successful defense of the motherland was, at the very best, supportive only. [Ref. 12: pp. 453-455,468]

Following World War Two the evolution of the Soviet Navy continued, however, further discussion becomes clouded by the many closed-source documents on the more recent developments. Post-war developments are also generally well known to the Western analyst (though they may not be completely understood). The developments of the latter half of this century are more contemporary than they are historical. This contemporary nature and the desire to avoid accidental reference to classified information, lead the author to keep comments on this period of Soviet naval history brief.

Post-war developments continued along the course set in 1937 as Stalin attempted to build a more balanced fleet. The goal of a more balanced fleet was driven mainly by the desire to counter the threat poised by the U.S. and British fleets. All post-war development would be invariably linked to Western developments. The construction of a balanced fleet would continue until Stalin's death in 1953. Stalin's successor as General Secretary was Nikita Krushchev. Krushchev was to have two major impacts on the character of the Soviet Navy. First he would denounce Stalin's plan for a balanced fleet, scrapping the construction program, and he would appoint Admiral Sergei Gorshkov to command the Navy. In place of Stalin's fleet, Krushchev began a fleet emphasising submarines and nuclear weapons. The second "innovation," Admiral Gorshkov, would serve well into the 1980's. After the highly embarrassing Cuban Missile Crisis, Gorshkov was

able to change Krushev's mind about the submarine fleet emphasis and return to a more balanced program. Nonetheless, the submarine remains the centerpiece of the modern Soviet fleet. [Ref. 20: pp. 90-94]

V. CONCLUSIONS

There are several inferences about the Soviet Navy, and the position it occupies in the Soviet Military, that can be drawn from the study of the Russian and Soviet naval development. These conclusions are important when attempting to place the Soviet Navy in the proper context, that is a Soviet context rather than that of a Westerner. The Soviet military's view of a navy is primarily one of subordination to and support of an army.

... the participation of a navy is most effective within the framework of a single overall operation in a continental theater of military operations where ground forces should play the main role....
[Ref 21: p. 23]

A major historical fact of Russian and Soviet naval development has been the Navy's consistent failure when attempting to conduct out of area, sea-control or other blue-water operations. There have been few successes in this venue. Of note are the defeat of the Swedes by both Peter I and Catharine II, the Mediterranean deployment and defeat of the Turks (also during Catharine II's reign), and the successes of the Napoleonic era. But lest one place undue emphasis on these successes, they all came against either inferior foes or with the aid of a strong naval ally. From the stumbling attempts to build a fleet prior to Peter I, to

the failure of Peter I to defeat the Turks and gain access to the Black Sea, to the humiliating defeats of the Crimean and Russo-Japanese Wars, to the containment in World Wars One and Two and the Civil War, and finally to the political embarrassment of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the list of Soviet blue-water failures is lengthy.

The Soviet Navy's blue-water failures are often independent of head of state interest, material condition of the fleets, training levels of the personnel, and opposing fleet strength. This pattern of failure leads the author to postulate that there exists in the Soviet military establishment, a perception that the Soviet Navy will most likely fail in any future blue-water endeavors. In a closed society such as the Soviet Union it is difficult to find definitive support for this view. Such an open admission of a lack of confidence in the Soviet Navy's ability to conduct blue-water operations would be a criticism of the Navy itself. Those familiar with Soviet society will know that such a criticism (if it existed) would not be made available in open source literature. The author realizes that historical fact alone is not enough to support his views. Perhaps tacit endorsement of this view may be found in the de-emphasis of blue-water operations in Soviet discussions of naval art.

Thus the traditional operations of fleet against fleet which, since ancient times, have been characteristics of the struggle against sea communications of the opposing

sides, are now being used in a new, decisive sphere-- operations of fleet against shore. [Ref. 4: p. 222]

The Russian and Soviet Navies have conducted a limited number of blue-water operations. The reason there have been few attempts at blue-water operations is not based on the failures, rather a geographical fact. Historically, the political and expansionist interests of Russia and the Soviet Union have been in the European and Asian land masses. There has been a corresponding lack of interest in North and South America. To further their aims on the continent, Russia and The Soviet Union would need a strong army but would have little need for a blue-water navy. Even objectives in Africa could be obtained with out a strong blue-water navy. This geographical fact leads the author to form a second opinion as to the perceived position of the Navy within the Soviet Union, that of a strong ground force bias.

While the ground force bias may be caused by geopolitical reasons, some of the supporting evidence of its existence is based on historical fact. Attacked by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, a strong army could have saved the country, a strong navy would have been next to useless. When Russia was invaded by Napoleon in 1812, and by the Germans in World War One and again in World War Two, the country was saved and the invaders repelled by the army. The navy's contribution was supporting at best. In World War Two and the Civil War the Soviet Army was able to succeed against a formidable foe in spite of Soviet naval inferiority.

Vice Admiral K. Stalbo, writing in Mosrkoy Sbornik in 1981 supports the view that navies cannot win wars alone. He argues that navies can only influence the course of a war [Ref. 22: pp. 20-28]. A strong navy may make the war on land go smoother, but certainly a strong navy is not mandatory to achieve victory. While this may not always be the case, it has been in all of the major conflicts involving Russia and the Soviet Union.

The continental bias is further supported by the historical fact of using Russian and Soviet naval personnel and equipment to bolster the land defenses. In the Crimean War Russian warships were sunk in Sevastopol harbor, their cannon and sailors were removed for defense of the city. Conditions were similar in the Baltic during World War One, the Civil War, and the Black and Baltic theaters of World War Two. These historical facts lead the author to the opinion that the perception in the Soviet Military is that the best use of a navy is to give the sailors rifles and put them in the trenches.

A topical example of the continental bias in the Soviet Military is the fact that all the current High Commanders of Forces for the Soviet Theaters of Strategic Military Action are Army Marshals or Generals [Ref. 23: p. 208], as are the present and past commanders of the sixteen Military Districts (Soviet Military Districts are roughly equivalent to a U.S. Joint Command) [Ref. 15: pp. 187-213].

The geographical constraints of the Eurasian land mass have led to the preeminence of the Army in Russian and Soviet military operations and the corresponding lack of interest in blue-water naval operations. Coastal naval operations are another matter. Based on the historical fact of Russian and Soviet naval success in brown-water operations, it is the opinion of the author that even in the Army dominated Soviet military, there is a belief that a navy could be of use in a supporting coastal role. From the liberation of Kiev by Rurik (although some would dispute this being a "Russian" operation), continuing to the Kievan attacks on Byzantium, the initial success of Peter I at Azov, and the few successes of the Civil and World Wars, most Russian and Soviet naval accomplishment have been in this area of warfare.

The experience of World War II and subsequent local wars has shown that ... the main naval mission of naval forces will be to deliver reinforcements and provisions by means of sea shipments....[Ref. 21: p. 26]

As stated in the introduction to this work, the author does not propose that theses of this nature replace the technological analysis of systems. However, historical research in the field of Command and Control to complement technological studies should be continued. This thesis has presented a broad look at Russian and Soviet naval history. This broad scope can be narrowed and the different periods of development explored in depth.

Particularly germane to the study and understanding of the force control of the modern Soviet Navy would be an examination of the operations of the Second World War. Inasmuch as many current U.S. naval tactics and control systems had their genesis in World War Two, the author suggests that perhaps so did current Soviet naval tactics and systems. Admiral V. Ponikarovskiv postulates that naval force control is at least navy specific.

There is no doubt that Navy control theory, as an integral part of Armed Forces control theory, should reflect Navy specifics in the performance of missions peculiar to the Navy. [Ref. 24: p. 19]

Conceivably the Soviet system of Naval Force Control is tighter and more stringent than that used to control ground forces.

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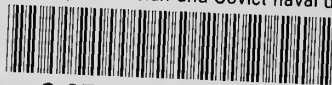
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